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New Survey Results Community Childrens Services and the National Quality Framework

Community children's services have demonstrated they have been integrating the National Quality Framework (NQF) into their services to the benefit of Australian families and children.

ACCS as the national peak advocating for the right of Australia's children to access quality, not for profit community children's services has conducted a second wave of Trends in Community Children's Services Survey (TICCSS) to create a National Report on how the community sector have engaged with and implemented the NQF.

Over 500 services representing Long Day Care, Family Day Care, Outside School Hours Care, Preschool/Kindergarten, In Home Care and Mobile Services and all states and territories participated and the key findings include:

- Services are integrating NQF into their operations and practice
- The new educator child ratios are being met
- Services are preparing for improvements in educator qualifications requirements due in 2014
- The sector is engaged in upskilling the existing workforce with more than one quarter of all employees currently engaged in studying for higher early childhood qualifications
- The national average fee for long day care was \$77.59

'This is a real achievement and acknowledgement of the vital role community children's services play in delivering quality education and care' said ACCS National Convenor Prue Warrilow.

'Community children's services are all working at the new NQF ratios, with 83% of long day care services operating at the ratio requirements due to be introduced in 2016, and over two thirds of long day care services already employing a qualified early childhood teacher.'

While affordability remains problematic for Australian families, these reforms have been implemented in the community sector with limited increases in fees from May to November 2012. The national average fee was \$77.59 for long day care, and this has not impacted on utilisation which is extremely high for community children's services. While recruitment continues to be difficult for many services ACCS believes this is not a product of the NQF but rather a product of an undervalued and under remunerated workforce. ACCS calls on the next Australian Government to provide ongoing direct investment in wages for educators in education and care services.

The TICCSS Report is available at www.ausccs.org.au

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